

HAWTHORNE HILLS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Established 1945; Serving over 1900 homes in Northeast Seattle

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2009 AUG 25 PM 1:57
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August 25, 2009

To: City Clerk and
To: Seattle City Council

APPEAL BY THE HAWTHORNE HILLS COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF ALTERNATIVE CONDITIONS OF THE HEARING EXAMINER FOR THE CITY OF SEATTLE IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL FOR APPROVAL OF A MAJOR INSTITUTION MASTER PLAN CF 308884

The Hawthorne Hills Community Council (HHCC) supports the Hearing Examiner's recommendation that, based on the specific record before her, the Seattle Children's Hospital Major Institution Master Plan (MIMP) application should be denied. The MIMP is inconsistent with Seattle's Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code. Seattle Children's Hospital should not be exempt from complying with the law. As the Hearing Examiner stated in her decision, "Children's is asking that the proverbial 'square peg' be forced into a 'round hole,' but it does not fit." The addition of 1.5 million square feet of development in a single-family, low-density area outside of an urban center or village is contrary to governing laws and will result in impacts that cannot be mitigated. In the event that the Council chooses not to follow the Hearing Examiner's recommendation for denial of master plan approval, the HHCC supports the conditions recommended by the Laurelhurst Community Club in its separate appeal.

As background, Hawthorne Hills is a neighborhood in northeast Seattle bounded on the north by NE 65th Street, on the south and east by the Burke Gilman Trail, and on the west by 40th Avenue NE. Over 1900 single family homes are within these boundaries. Many of the bus and car commuters are traveling on Sand Point Way NE and are much affected by the traffic conditions on that major north south state route. Hawthorne Hills will be directly affected by the additional traffic generated by the increase in size of the proposed master plan. Seattle's Department of Neighborhoods and the City Council recognized HHCC as a stakeholder in the master planning process by designating a representative from our board to serve on the Children's Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). The HHCC representative on the CAC signed

onto several of the unprecedented 13 minority reports submitted as part of the final CAC report.

The Major Institutions Code calls for a balance between the hospital's needs and maintaining the livability and vitality of the surrounding communities. Achieving this balance and ensuring that the impacts of the expansion are mitigated means that conditions must be imposed to ensure a compatible development. HHCC supports the conditions recommended by the Laurelhurst Community Club. Of particular importance is the need for conditions to address the following:

Major Institution boundaries should not be expanded across Sand Point Way. This is something strongly discouraged by the Major Institutions Code and the City's Comprehensive Plan. It is also contrary to the rezone criteria for boundary expansion. The criteria clearly require that boundaries provide for contiguous areas that are as compact as possible within constraints of existing development and property ownership.

Square footage should be substantially reduced as a condition of master plan approval. Early in the process, the CAC, the Northeast District Council of which HHCC is a member, and other community organizations asked Children's to develop an expansion plan with considerably less square footage. Seattle Children's refused to compromise on square footage and should be required to do so as a condition of master plan approval.

Building heights should be limited as a condition of master plan approval. Children's Hospital is located in a single-family, low density area of the City. It is not an area targeted in the City's Comprehensive Plan to receive any kind of infusion of growth. The maximum height the City has ever allowed for a major institution in a low density area is 105 feet. A condition should be imposed setting 105 feet as the maximum building height.

The 160-foot height limit, conditioned to 140 feet is inconsistent with the City's goals and policies governing single family areas. One of the goals in the Comprehensive Plan in this regard calls for preservation and protection of low-density, single family neighborhoods that are attractive to households with children and other residents and that provide residents with privacy and open spaces. The City's policies permit upzones in single family areas only when the land is within an urban center village boundary, the rezone is provided for in an adopted neighborhood plan and the rezone is to a low-scale single family, multifamily or mixed-use zone compatible with single family areas. Children's master plan meets none of these conditions. The 140 foot height limits sought by Children's have only been allowed in Urban Centers, never in a single-family zone.

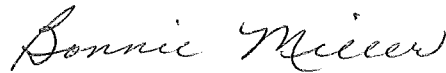
Confirmation of bed need should be a condition of each phase of development. Because of the huge discrepancy between what the hospital has projected for its bed needs and what an independent consultant has determined, a condition should be imposed requiring state board of health bed need approval prior to each phase of development.

Transportation mitigation beyond that provided in the master plan and EIS must be a condition of master plan approval. Even without expansion at Children's Hospital, the area is already struggling with major traffic issues and a lack of transportation infrastructure. There is gridlock

along Montlake Boulevard going north at most times of the day. The Level of Service (LOS) at the Five Corners intersection is F. In both directions along Sand Point Way, vehicles exceed the speed limit and there have been serious accidents at 40th Avenue, including one involving a fatality. Along much of the highly-congested Sand Point Way, there are no sidewalks. This raises serious pedestrian and bicycle safety issues. The massive expansion proposed by Children's will severely exacerbate the existing traffic and transportation issues. And, there are many projects in the pipeline—a 26 percent expansion at University Village, redevelopment of QFC and replacement of SR 520, just to name a few.

The HHCC requests that it be given notices as a party to the Council process as it moves forward.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of HHCC,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bonnie Miller".

Bonnie Miller
Chair, Land Use Committee
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